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1 Jesus, the True Salt

'Ye are the salt of the earth' (Matt. 5 : 13). I believe there is a precious message for us in this fragment from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. This wonderful Sermon, contained in Matthew chapters 5 to 7, is well known in every part of the world. Even those who do not believe the Gospel often quote from it. There is no doubt that it contains a very high moral standard for mankind. You will find that the Lord sums up the whole Sermon of three chapters in these few words, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'.

What does salt mean?

1. *Taste*: Let us consider what is the meaning of salt. Firstly, it adds to the taste. Human beings in every country like to have salt in their food. Any dish may be very well cooked, but if it has no salt nobody will like the taste. Those who have high blood-pressure, and there are many such nowadays, are advised not to take salt in their diet. You can imagine how much they suffer. Even though you eat a large quantity of food, if it is without salt, you are not satisfied. A small quantity of salt can give much taste to food. The Lord's intention is to gather to Himself a people who, like salt, can bring health and enjoyment to the whole world.

2. *Faithfulness*: Salt represents faithfulness. There is a saying in Hindi which says, Be not ungrateful to him whose salt you have eaten. There is a story of a thief who went to rob a house. As it was empty, he was able to open one box after another and gather much loot. He

made a very large bundle of it and placed it on his head. As he was about to leave the house he noticed something on a shelf. He thought it must be sugar and put a small quantity into his mouth. It was salt. Then he said to himself, 'I have eaten the salt of this house, so how can I rob this wealth from here?' So, the story says, he left the whole bundle there and went away. Thus, salt is usually spoken of as representing loyalty and faithfulness.

3. *Preservation*: Salt is also used to preserve things. Generally butter gets spoiled if kept too long, but if you add a little salt to it, it keeps for a long time. In the same manner, if you put rocksalt in ghee it will be in good condition for many months; otherwise it will smell bad after some days. Salt is also used to preserve pickles. Fish, beef and mutton are also preserved with salt. Thus salt represents something that preserves things for a long time.

4. *Friendship*: Salt also represents an abiding friendship. In 2 Chronicles 13:5, we read of a 'covenant of salt'. In the margin it is rendered 'a perpetual covenant of friendship'. Every meat offering in the Old Testament was offered with salt (Lev. 2:13; Mark 9:49, 50). So salt represents eternal life, and faithfulness in friendship and love. These sacrifices were offered in order to obtain God's friendship.

All this helps us to understand why the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. In all that He said and did He had one object, that through them He might provide salt for the health and enjoyment of the whole world.

Christ, the True Salt

Without Christ this world is like food without salt. If you are given saltless food morning, noon and night, day after day, even though you may have a large quantity

of such food and in much variety every time, you will get sick of it within a few days. You will say that without salt the food is no good. In the same way, the world without Christ is of no use.

1. *He chooses a few to make them salt*: Before the Lord Jesus came into this world, it was like a wilderness. There was no joy anywhere. There was only sorrow, suffering and misery. Then the Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry. Before doing this, He was baptized in the river Jordan and was tempted in the wilderness. After this He straightaway went to Galilee. He said to some men: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men, and straightaway they followed Him (Matt. 4:18-22). You see that the Lord Jesus did not begin His ministry with a multitude. Was it because there was no multitude available there? No. Multitudes had come to hear John the Baptist as he preached and baptized in the river Jordan, near Jericho. To such a place the Lord Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John. One might have thought that he would stay on in such a place and preach to the multitude. But He did not. He left the multitudes, and after forty days of temptation in the wilderness He came to the land of Galilee. He had to travel more than a hundred miles to do so. Why so? It was because the few men whom He wanted to make His disciples, were living in Capernaum. This was a wellknown town by the sea of Galilee, and Simon, Andrew, James and John lived there. Imagine, for the sake of four or five men, the Lord Jesus travelled such a long distance. Why? Because He was going to make these few men as salt for the whole world.

2. *He draws all in need*: After He had chosen these few men the Lord went about teaching in the synagogues in that area. Then the multitudes came after Him. He never called them, but they just came. As they saw

the power and authority manifested through Him, they flocked around Him. They came to Him to receive healing and deliverance. They came to Him from all classes of society. They came from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and from beyond Jordan.

The people living in Galilee had everything in plenty. It was a fertile country. It was regarded at that time as a land of plenty. They had very good water, plenty of fruits, and corn and fish. As far as their earthly needs were concerned they had no lack. Inspite of all this there were people among them suffering from all kinds of diseases.

Decapolis means 'a group of ten cities'. It was about 80 miles from the river Jordan. These ten cities lay in a large valley. They had very grand buildings, for this was a district of beauty and luxury, with many activities intended to bring comfort and pleasure to the people. Inspite of all this, these people were unhappy, and they also came to the Lord Jesus.

Jerusalem was the centre of religion. The Temple was there. There were to be found the High Priest and many Levites who served in the Temple. There were prophets to give messages from God to the people. The people of Jerusalem could boast of their Temple, their prophets and their forefathers, but they were blind *spiritually*.

Our Lord drew people from all directions. That is why we find that, as the people heard of the fame of our Lord, they came swarming around Him from different places right from Decapolis to Jordan. What was their state? They were all like food without salt. They had no real joy in their hearts or in their lives. They were absolutely useless.

3. *'I will make you salt'*: In chapter 5 we read that our Lord looked at the multitudes and began to deliver

His message. He told them that they had come there for healing, but healing would not make them happy. He healed them, yet they were not happy. They were still miserable. They had no true joy. That is why He said to them, You need salt. Once there was a doctor in North India who healed every disease with salt; so much so, people called him Dr. Salt. I have found by experience how salt removes hoarseness of the throat. Whenever I have throat trouble I use salt. The Lord was telling the multitudes: 'You must depend upon salt for your happiness'. He was saying further, 'Firstly, I will give you salt, secondly, I will make you salt; you will become the salt of the earth'. We all know how a small quantity of salt can make food tasty. Our Lord was saying, 'When you become my salt, even though you are few, through you I will give true peace, joy and happiness to the whole world'. That is why He chose only a few men in the beginning. He never asked the multitude to follow Him, but He said to a few chosen men, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men'; in other words, I will make you the salt of the earth'.

Christ, the purifier of salt

Salt has to be purified before it can be used. Salt was manufactured in Palestine from the waters of the Dead Sea. It had to be purified before it was used for cooking. There are several stages in the purification of salt. We find ten stages mentioned in Matthew 5 : 3-12. Those who follow the Lord have to go through these stages and then only can they become true salt. What a joy it is to be like good salt bringing blessing to the whole world!

Salt without savour

Today we find sorrow, suffering and unhappiness everywhere. Men's lives are like salt without savour.

When salt is refined, it is separated into two parts; one has taste and the other is tasteless. The latter will be thrown out. Sometimes it is used to fill up the basements of buildings under construction. The salt which has lost its savour is quite useless. It is not useful either for trees or for human beings or for birds. Our condition will be similar to this if we become like the salt that has lost its savour.

Are you good salt?

Now consider your condition; can you be called good salt, or salt that has lost its savour? We will see later, how we can become good salt. Our Lord wants us to be good salt that we may bring new taste and new joy into many lives. The few fishermen who became the Lord's disciples, even though few in number, had more joy than the multitudes.

May the Lord help us to become good salt.

2 Jesus Seasons Salt

'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men' (Matthew 5:13). 'Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear' (Luke 14:34, 35).

I have already drawn your attention to the first part of Matthew 5:13 quoted above: 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. Now we shall consider the second part of the same verse. I want you to notice also the words in Luke 14:34, 'Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?'. The Lord is speaking of salt which has lost its savour: please keep that in mind.

Salt without savour

(a) Unsaved people.

I mentioned to you how the Lord, as He saw the multitudes coming to Him, was comparing the life of a sinner to salt that has lost its savour. We saw in Matthew 4:25 how there followed him multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and from beyond Jordan. On seeing those multitudes, He uttered the words in Matthew 5:13. He could see two kinds of people: one, a very small group, which could be called salt; the other, a large group, perhaps more than 5,000, who could be called salt that had lost its savour. The

good salt was very small in quantity, answering to the handful of disciples that followed Him. The others were those who loved just to see miracles and eat loaves and fishes; and the Lord compared them with salt that had lost its savour.

We see in Luke 14:34 quoted above, that the Lord makes a very remarkable statement. The dunghill provides food for ants, worms, and other small insects. Our Lord says the salt that has lost its savour is not fit even for the dunghill; it is useless, so much so, that if you bring ants, worms and insects and put them in it, they will not stay there long; even they cannot thrive in it. The salt that has lost its savour is useless and must be thrown away somewhere. Such is the condition of the person who has not been saved.

If you cannot say truthfully, joyfully and clearly, that the Lord has forgiven you your sins, washed away your defilement, and given you a new divine nature, you are like the salt that has lost its savour. No matter who you are, you are useless. Your stay upon this earth is only a burden. Wherever you go and wherever you live, you will bring nothing but misery and sorrow.

Please say truthfully what your life is like. Is your life bringing any good to anyone? Are your neighbours and friends being profited spiritually through your life? What kind of spiritual profit have your brothers, sisters, friends, and relations, received through your words, works, testimony and prayers? You see, those who are not truly born again can never say truthfully that they are of any help or use to others. Their life is being wasted.

(*b*) *Unbelieving Israel.*

All this can be aptly illustrated by the people of Palestine. They had been scattered because of their dis-

obedience to God and were living in all countries of the world. Now we see them coming back, and being forced by many circumstances, to settle in Palestine. They have brought with them wealth and knowledge from the other countries, and in twenty-five years have changed the land now occupied by them, from a desert into a fertile country. Had you gone to Palestine twenty-five years ago you would have seen nothing but a desert. Now you find a beautiful country with very prosperous cities everywhere. They are still building new roads, schools and universities. Thus they can show from the Scriptures how, long before Christ came into the world, the prophets had said that the land which had become a desert, would again become fertile. They have carefully preserved the Scriptures. I spent a few days in Palestine with believers who are Jewish converts, and they told me how they cannot but feel sorry for their countrymen. With so many advantages, they are still in darkness and blindness. They can really be called salt that has lost its savour. They are in total spiritual blindness. They are bitterly opposed to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will not allow anyone to preach the Gospel openly these days. They do not mind evil coming into the country; in fact they have already brought with them many evils from Europe and other countries. But they do not want the Gospel. That is why they are like the salt that has lost its savour.

(*c*) *Seekers of loaves and fishes.*

The Lord said about the Pharisees and Sadducees who went after Him, that they were following Him only because they had eaten of the loaves. They were offended at these words and went away (cf. John 6:5, 26, 27 and 66). They thought it was wonderful to be fed miraculously without labour and even without the trouble of cooking food. So the Lord tells them in verses

26, 27: 'Ye are seeking for the loaves to satisfy you. It does not matter what kind of a loaf you eat, it will never give you true satisfaction. I am the bread of life; you must eat Me. I will teach you how to eat Me. Then you can live for ever'. When they heard these words they became angry and were offended and walked no more with Him. They were people familiar with prophecy, yet totally blind spiritually. So they went away. They had come so near but failed. They could have received God's kingdom, but they went away empty. That is why our Lord compared them with salt that has lost its savour.

Be good salt—comforting, edifying.

Now please consider what your condition before God is. Can you be compared with good salt, or are you only like salt that has lost its savour? There are experienced cooks who know exactly how much salt to use. There are others who can never learn that lesson; sometimes they use too much, sometimes too little. If you know how to put in the exact amount of salt the food will be so tasty and good. Just as the salt gives taste to food, so should your life be. Wherever you go or stay, your life should be like salt. It should bring enjoyment to those all around you. Your words and your presence should bring comfort to others. I want you to know for yourself what your real condition is before God today. Please be truthful. How many enemies, friends, strangers and relations have been spiritually benefited by your life? We preachers love salt. Every time our throats get hoarse and rough we use salt. There is nothing better than that. See how thankful we all are to salt. Just a small quantity brings relief. That is how your life should be.

By nature, we are like red pepper. Rather than bring-

ing relief and comfort, we hurt the feelings of others and bring pain. Often we are like some visitors who make us say in our heart, 'When will they go away?' Outwardly you may say, 'Please have some tea or coffee', but in your heart you wish they would go away soon. And when they do go, how relieved you feel! There are others who bring blessing to you and you feel sad when they are gone. Like a small quantity of salt they brought you joy, comfort and encouragement and refreshed you.

The Lord our Salt seasons us

The Lord Jesus Himself is our Salt. It is only by His life coming into our life, that we are able to live like salt. I am concerned about one thing, and that is that you should see for yourself what your condition is before the Lord. You may have titles and degrees attached to your name. People may honour you. Yet perhaps God says to you, 'You are Mr. Salt, but you have lost your savour'. But when you are changed by Him, wherever you go, you will be called by a new name and people will receive you and welcome you like good salt.

These days we see men and women who take pride in culture, education, buildings and worldly honour, but wherever they go they bring misery, sadness, defilement and sorrow. By the words they speak and the books they read we can see how low they have fallen. They live in shameful and defiling ways. If you are like that, we pray that the Lord may change you right now. Do not wait till tomorrow. You must be changed today. Your nature, your heart and your life must become new. That is what God wants to do for you.

Some people find joy and pleasure in serving others. This is because they have become good salt. Suppose you say to salt, 'Mr. Salt, thank you very much; you have made my food very tasty', what will Mr. Salt say?

He will say, 'It is my pleasure, duty and privilege. I am not doing any favour to you. I was made for that purpose'. Whether young or old, if you have the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in you, you will look for an opportunity to help others. You will bring comfort, joy and relief to others, and then you will find your own life becomes full of joy too. Has God made you good salt or not? Can you truthfully say, I have become good salt in the hand of God?

The Lord's seasoning forges eternal bonds

Now please turn again to Luke 14:25-27. When we first read these words we cannot understand why one should hate father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife and children, and even one's own life. But our Lord Himself gives the answer in Luke 8:19-21. In the beginning, Jesus' relatives did not want to encourage Him. They were saying 'He is mad and beside Himself'. But when they saw the crowds coming after Him, they went to meet Him and sent a messenger saying, 'You go and tell Him that your brothers and mother have come to see you'. Now they had not really come to see Him, but they wanted to be honoured along with Him, so that the multitudes might say, 'These are His mother and brothers'. First they had said 'He is beside Himself' and now they say, 'You are our brother'. The Lord replied, 'Who are my mother, and brothers? Those who do the will of God, they are my mother, brothers and sisters.' When do we hate our brothers, sisters, father and mother? When we see sin in anyone, whoever that may be, we hate the sin in him. We cannot have any fellowship with sin. By nature all men are sinful, so they cannot be our true brothers and sisters. Those who belong to the Lord and do His will become our brothers and sisters for eternity. Our Lord is saying that if you want true brothers and sisters who will love you for all

eternity, then you must first learn to be free from the partiality of human love. Then only will you be useful. Not only to your own sisters and brothers, but wherever you go, you will be useful to all men. I had the privilege of visiting many cities in several countries of the world. When the people whom we meet here and there write and say that they have been benefited by some few words spoken to them, we greatly rejoice to hear it. How great is the privilege given to us to help others!

Oh, come! Abide in Him!

Once again we ask you, 'How much comfort, inspiration, peace and joy do others receive through you daily? Or are you like the salt that has lost its savour?' Such salt is neither fit for the land as manure, nor for the dunghill where there are pests and insects, nor to anybody else. Such a life is a wasted life. I have heard many people say, just before they die, 'My life has been wasted!' I have seen them shed tears saying, 'Now it is too late. My life is almost gone. I can see nothing but waste'. Take care that you do not lead such a life. Your life can be fruitful and profitable. Everybody who comes in touch with you can receive something from you. The Lord is powerful to change you. Come to Jesus and say to Him, 'O Lord, I have been till today like salt that has lost its savour. I am unwanted by everybody. Will you change my life today so that I can bring comfort, and be fruitful to my fellowmen, in my college, in my business or wherever I am?'

The Lord Jesus called a few men to follow Him and said to them, 'I will make you fishers of men'. He can do this for you also. Men and women can be saved through your life and prayer, provided you first become His salt.

Now, how can any branch bring forth fruit without

abiding in the vine? See John 15:4. Rather, it will wither away. If the branch abides in the vine, then it will yield fruit. That is how our life also can yield plenty of fruit. Through word or action, you can bring forth fruit, provided the life of the Lord Jesus Christ flows in you. If not, you can come to the Lord Jesus Christ now and have your sins forgiven. Call upon Him this very moment and He will forgive you and pour His life into you. He will teach you how to abide in Him and how to bring forth fruit.

3 Seasoning of Salt—1: A Broken and Contrite Heart

Chosen few become Salt

I have been drawing your attention to this small fragment of Scripture 'Ye are the salt of the earth' (Matthew 5 : 13). The Lord Jesus was going about Galilee with His few disciples. Multitudes came after Him from parts of the country; from Decapolis, Galilee, Jordan, Jerusalem, Judaea and from beyond Jordan. They had heard about His miracles; therefore they came from all parts to be healed by Him. But our Lord had one great objective before Him and that was to call a few disciples for the work to be done on the earth. When He saw the multitude coming after Him, we are told, He went up a mountain. There on the mountain, not far from Galilee, He preached the wellknown and wonderful Sermon on the Mount. That sermon is found in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. At that time He made this statement, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. He had come to seek and to save sinners that He might provide salt and light for the whole world. Whatever the Lord did, He did with that thought in mind: to provide salt, which could bring everlasting joy to mankind; and light, which could give everlasting life.

We see from God's Word how, by coming into His hand, we can become His salt. Some of you may have seen how salt is made by the seaside. Sea-water, which is full of salt, is evaporated and the salt remains behind. This salt has to be purified before it can be used. God wants good, pure salt. Each one of us can become that good, pure salt. Even though we be a very small

number, wherever we are we can be sufficient to bring joy to the whole country. While we require many bags of rice to provide food for thousands, we do not need so much salt. To make good food, we do not require much salt. A small quantity of salt can give taste to the food needed for many people. There are cities, towns and villages where believers are just a few in number, perhaps only two, three, four or five. Yet those few believers can be sufficient to bring joy, gladness, happiness and light to all the people of that place. That is why the Lord compares believers to a city on a hill. The city on a hill can be seen from many miles away. Even one believer is sufficient to tell people that there is life and light in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even though multitudes followed the Lord Jesus Christ, only a small number of them became His disciples. Yet those few have turned the world upside down. They were just ordinary men, but because they were disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, they became salt. Through them, you find that the love of God has been made known to every nation in the world.

True Salt—Divine love

In some parts of North India, when a visitor arrives, they will first of all give him something very salty to eat, and a glass of water. In doing this they say to the visitor, 'We receive and welcome you, and we give this to show our love to you'. Thus salt stands for true and fervent love.

True love can only be shown by believers. Your mother, father, brothers, sisters, or friends cannot love you in the same way as your fellow-believers. Human love changes. As time, circumstances and conditions of life change, human love will also change. But the love of the Lord Jesus Christ will never change. When the

Lord Jesus Christ says, 'Ye are the salt of the earth', He means that through you He wants His eternal life to be shown, declared and preached wherever you go. People of many races, speaking more than 1,155 languages, have received that same love through those who are born again. People of all conditions, like cannibals, murderers and thieves, who had been absolutely rejected by society, are now testifying of God's love to others.

During the last war, there was a soldier lying very sorely wounded in a hospital. When King George went to visit the hospital and see the patients, he came to this man's bedside. He saw his pain and suffering and felt very sorry for him. He said to him, 'Young man, can I do anything for you? Have you got any request?' The soldier said, 'Your majesty, I want only one favour. Will you please thank that nurse for nursing me so kindly and lovingly all these months?' There were tears in his eyes as he uttered these words. 'Even my own mother or sister would not have cared for me like that nurse. She has been nursing me so kindly, lovingly and patiently all these days and nights. Please, Sir, thank her on my behalf.' So the king called her and said, 'Nurse, on behalf of my wounded soldier, I want to thank you for your kind nursing'. The nurse replied, 'Your Majesty, I have not nursed him. It is God who is living in me that has nursed him. Please, Sir, the Lord Jesus Christ has saved me by His grace and gave me love for him'. That is true love, which cannot be received from either friends or relations. Earthly love is dependant on earthly conditions; but divine love goes deeper under every circumstance. That is why the Lord said, 'Love your enemies!' What wonderful salt! The persons who hate us and curse us can be loved by us. We can love them not only to give them temporary relief from their suffering, but to make them partakers of the same love for eternity. Even

though the food may be just lentils and that not even cooked properly, the salt put into it makes it more tasty than mutton, fowl or fish, without salt. It is the same way with divine love. We can offer people something for eternity, wherever they may be. As we come in contact with them, we will be able to give them the real taste of divine salt.

Salt can bring real relief in many ways. Some people eat too much ghee and butter, and their stomachs start bloating. That is why they have to take soda, wherever they go. For such people salt is useful to take away the bloating from the stomach. In fact salt can give you relief from many ailments. Every one of us must become God's true salt.

How we become true salt

We see in verse 3 of Matthew 5, how we can be made such true salt. We must have a humble, broken and contrite spirit. That is the first stage in the purification of the salt. People throughout the world have been trying to find God. People of all classes and religions have been trying to build many great buildings with the desire of seeking God, thinking that through such grand buildings, they would be able to find God. They spend much time, energy and money on these buildings.

Some years ago, I saw in Lebanon the ruins of a very old temple built by the Romans. We can see, still standing there, huge pillars and very thick walls, about 40 or 50 feet high, built with very big stones. One wonders how such big stones could have been lifted up so high. People have built high buildings through much hardship, with the longing to find God. But when you go inside you find the devil there! I found many Roman Catholic buildings in Palestine—huge buildings in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and Galilee. They are very grand

buildings; but inside, there is nothing but darkness, evil, shame and sin. They think that through such buildings, they can come nearer to God and feel His presence more (cf. Isaiah 57 : 15 and 66 : 2). God does not live in buildings made by hands, whether they are built by Christians, Mohammedans, Jews or by anybody else. The Jews thought because they had a very great temple built by Solomon they knew God better. But that very same temple became a ruin and if you go to Jerusalem now, you will find Mohammedan mosques there. God does not live in buildings which men have made. He lives in a broken and contrite heart. What an honour and a privilege! Only when God Himself comes to live in us, can we become the salt of the earth. Only then can we show true love to all men and even to our enemies. Otherwise our hearts will remain full of jealousy, enmity and corruption. The whole world, these days, is full of hatred and bitterness; nation against nation, brother against brother, friend against friend, and children against parents. Why? Because there is no salt in them.

Sometimes God uses many painful means to make us truly humble. Read what David says in Psalm 51 : 17. He learnt his lesson through very bitter experience. We see in 1 Samuel 16 : 12, 18, the outward qualifications of David, when he was a young man. How many good outward virtues he had. He could play an instrument, he was a mighty man of war, a very prudent and wise man, and fit to be a king. Yet he never knew the inward filthiness of his own heart. The time came when he was sorely tempted by the flesh. You find the story in 2 Samuel 11. In a cunning and subtle way the devil deceived him. The great, wise, noble king became an adulterer. And then, because of that sin, he became a deceiver, a hypocrite, a cunning man and finally a murderer. Although he was a wise and noble king he was deceived by the devil.

Every human being is liable to be so deceived. After that downfall, David learnt a lesson. So now he says with great sorrow in his heart, 'In sin did my mother conceive me' (Psalm 51:5). He had begun to realize the filthy condition of the human heart.

There are some children who look very nice, sweet and charming. They are so attractive, loving and sweet, that you feel like kissing their toes. But after two or three hours, when they become stubborn, angry and start kicking, they seem devilish! It is because we are all born with a sinful nature, as God's Word says.

Now David cried, 'Oh God, forgive me my sins; against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow'. See, he was conscious of his inward defilement. He was crying to be washed, 'Oh Lord, purge me, purge me'. Now that word 'purge' in English applies to gold being refined in the fire. You cannot clean gold just by washing it in water. It must be refined, or purged by fire. When gold is refined it has to go through the fire seven times. This process of refining is called 'purging'. By this purging, even the dirt hidden inside will come out and be completely removed. We do not realize how much corruption, evil and defilement we all have in our hearts. It is only the light of God coming inside that can enable us to see it. When you know what you are, you will cry like David, 'Lord, purge me and wash me thoroughly. Cleanse me inwardly and outwardly. Cleanse me from all evil'. The heart from which such a cry comes is called a broken and a contrite heart. If your heart is not like that you will remain as salt that has lost its savour. God cannot come and live in you. If you want to become good salt like David, then cry unto the Lord to cleanse you.

True salt brings blessing

See how much comfort the Psalms of David have brought to mankind throughout the world. Men in sorrow, trouble and discouragement have read the Book of Psalms. How many have been blessed through Psalms 23. 91. 103 and 104! All these wonderful Psalms have divine salt, healing men of every kind of wound. They have wiped away so many tears, lifted so many burdens, and brought peace to so many people. It is only after David became a man with a broken heart, that he became a man of true salt. This is the first stage in becoming divine salt; 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 5:3). Now see what reward is received by such people. Not only do they become God's dwelling place, and God's salt, but God's Word says here, 'Their's is the kingdom of heaven!' They become partakers and heirs of God's holy kingdom. This is not possible by Bible knowledge, or college degrees, or good sermons, or singing, or miracles, but by being of a broken heart. You have to become more and more humble before God. It is a life-long lesson. That is why the Lord says we should know our own spiritual poverty, and our inward corruption. God's grace and love are available to change us.

There are certain diseases which cannot be diagnosed without the help of the X-ray. Without it, even a very clever doctor cannot correctly diagnose such diseases. When they have taken the X-ray photo, they may discover that the brain or intestines have had that disease for many years, quite unknown to the patient. The X-ray will reveal the whole thing, as these rays can penetrate the body.

I know a young man who was suffering from a bad throat and cough. He thought it was an ordinary cold.

One day someone advised him to go to a good doctor for diagnosis. He went, and the doctor said that an X-ray should be taken. Then, when it was taken and examined, the doctor told the young man, 'I am sorry, young man, you have got T.B.' He took that X-ray photo and went home weeping. His mother asked him, 'What is the matter? Why are you weeping?' He said, 'I have got T.B.!' Then the whole family started to weep. They were poor people. They had no money to send him to a sanatorium. So they sold everything possible in order to get him properly treated in the sanatorium. Then he was cured.

Now the real light is the light which you receive in the Lord. The light of God has to come into us so that we may see our own personal condition. He says very clearly, 'I am the light of the world.' He is not the light of the candle or the light of the sun or the light of the electric bulb; but He is the Eternal Light. We are told in the Word of God that in the new creation there is no need of any kind of lighting. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the Light. Now the mystery is that this eternal, divine, pure Light is now being offered to us. First of all, by the help of that Light, we will see our sinful defilement and true condition. That is going to be our X-ray. Just as the young man became anxious and started to weep after he saw the photograph, in the same way, it is only when the light of God comes into you, that you will see your true condition and feel truly sorry.

When a man goes to a photographer to have his picture taken, he usually borrows a coat and a watch and other things, and tries to look his best. His hair will be beautifully brushed and combed. He will be sure to have a shave and will even powder his face. Even though his face may actually be ugly and black, if it turns out to

be a very nice photo, he feels happy, and keeps on saying, 'See my photo!' Now, the Bible will not give you a wrong, deceptive photo like that! You will be made to see clearly and minutely what you really are. We ought to be thankful when we are made to see our true condition. Then we can call upon Him with a broken heart saying, 'Yes, Lord, I never knew; my heart is very wicked, sinful and defiled. Have mercy upon me!' Then He replies, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; and with cords of love I have drawn thee.' Because He loves me, He shows me my true condition, so that He may wash me and come into me.

Now, supposing you are told today that some great person in India desires to come and stay in your house for a few hours. You will make much preparation. You will say, 'So-and-so is coming to my house!' You will clean every spot in the house. Even though you might not have washed your bathroom for the last twenty-five years, on that day, you will buy a big tin of phenyle and clean the whole house so that the visitor may get good smell. Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ wants to come and live in us for all eternity. That is why we must be cleansed. We must have a broken and contrite heart. That is the beginning of the process of becoming salt. The holy, loving God, the great God, the living God, wants to come and dwell in us.

Have you become that salt? Can your friends, neighbours and others taste that divine salt through you? If not, please become true salt now. Then you will find, that wherever you go, tears will be wiped away through your words, and many burdens will be rolled away. New joy will come to many homes. Your whole town and country will be blessed through you. Day by day, more and more people will be prepared through you to become such divine salt.

God lives in a humble heart and a broken spirit. He comes to give us His All and He will live in us forever. When people go to visit relations, usually, they will not go empty handed; they will take with them sweets or fruits. When I was a boy, my mother once told me that my uncle was coming to visit us. She said, 'He is very kind and very wealthy too; the last time he came he brought us many things.' So when my uncle arrived, before he could enter the door of our house, I put my hands into his pockets; and, sure enough, there was a small package in it! God gives us everything when He comes to live in our hearts. He brings His fulness. With Him is the whole kingdom. His full glory is for us. Will you not become broken now and be washed by His blood?

May God make us of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

4 Seasoning of Salt—2: Trials

We have seen how the Lord Jesus Christ is gathering men who are to be like the salt of the earth. We have considered how salt plays an important part in our lives. People use salt for trees and crops. Many kinds of salt are found in the earth. You find the roots of plants travel very far in search of it. We have seen that for health also, salt is necessary. The bones, muscles and blood all require salt. Salt preserves vegetables, butter and ghee. We know how a small quantity of salt brings good taste to the food we eat every day. In every country, people require salt for their food. We see how salt speaks of joy, love, light and health. Now the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to provide salt for the health, joy, life and happiness of all mankind. Thus we have seen how in many countries, joy and health is being brought to many people through a small number of believers.

Divine X-ray reveals heart's condition

Now we shall see in the Sermon on the Mount how we con become true salt. The salt is of no use for food while it is in the sea-water. It has to be separated from water and refined before it becomes useful. We have seen in Matthew 5:3 the first step in becoming refined, pure salt: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.' This is the first stage of the refining; we must come to God with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

The second step in making us good salt is comfort in

trials. 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted' (Matthew 5:4). These words are full of meaning. We find that as soon as we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ from our hearts, we have to face situations which we had never thought of before. Before our conversion, our friends, relatives and parents praised us very much. But as soon as we decided to obey our Lord Jesus Christ, our friends became enemies! Our brothers and sisters, children and parents who loved us very much, have begun to hate us! In my family I am the eldest son, and so from childhood my mother, father, brothers and sisters showed me much love. They never said a word to wound me or hurt me. But when I became a Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ became my personal Saviour, changed my life and delivered me completely from my evil ways and gave me new life, then my relations and friends rejected me! When I came back to India in 1933, my parents met me in Bombay. My father said to me, 'only mother and I know that you are a Christian.' (I had written a long letter to my father telling him how the Lord had changed my life.) My father continued, 'We have not the least objection to your being a Christian. We will not stop you going to Christian meetings. You can go wherever you like and do whatever you like. We have only one request: as long as you are in our home, don't say that you are a Christian!' I said to my father, 'If the Lord Jesus Christ had not changed my life, I would have lived a life of sin, wasting money and doing all sorts of wicked things. But now the Lord Jesus Christ has delivered me and changed me and given me a new life. He has sent me to you to show you the way of salvation.' I continued, 'Supposing I close my mouth and nose, how long would I live? Similarly, now my Lord is my life. How can I live denying Him?' 'In that case', my father replied, 'you cannot come home!' Even though

I had come back to India after seven years, they did not want me to go home. With tears my mother had written to me again and again while I was away, 'We are counting the hours and days for you to come home.' But when I actually came back I was not wanted! So, whatever money I had, I gave to my father as a sign of respect. He left me in Bombay and went away. What a sorrowful thing it was! At that time I thought, if I had come back to India as a drunkard and adulterer, they would have welcomed me. Now that my Lord had changed me and given me a new life, they did not want me! My mother began to weep at the railway station, and she said to me, 'For my sake won't you come home for a few days? What is the harm in saying that you are not a Christian? We are not going to stop you from reading the Bible and from praying. Perhaps if you come, many will become changed as you are.' I told my mother that my God came first. But when I saw her crying more and more, a thought came to me, 'Let me go home for her sake. After all, she is my mother, I must respect her. I can go for just a few days.' I was about to say so, but something took hold of my throat. Words would not come out of my mouth. After a few moments, I heard these words, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Whosoever loveth father or mother, brother or sister more than Me is not worthy to follow Me.' So I said to my mother, 'I am sorry, my Lord comes first.' Then they both left me in Bombay and went away.

I was a complete stranger in Bombay. Not a single person there knew me. There was no money in my pocket and no place to go to. For some time I was very sad. But now I can thank God, even though for a period I was hated, despised and rejected, that very same sorrow was later turned into joy. My father had a dream in

which he heard somebody saying, 'Your son has found peace, do not trouble him.' So my father came to me and took me home. There, he said to everybody, 'My son has found true peace, don't say a word against him.' At the same time he kept on abusing me and cursing me for many days. All who came to the home would say to my parents, 'We are very sorry to hear about your son; what a sorrow!' This went on for many days. Right before me, they would begin to abuse and curse me.

Remember, there are times when we all have to go through sorrow and criticism. You cannot help but be sorrowful when your own brothers and sisters hate you, curse you and abuse you. But thank God, we are comforted by our Lord Jesus Christ.

As time went on, God began to speak to all in my family in His own way. I allowed them to curse me and abuse me and I never said a single word against them. Also, in my heart I had no hatred for them. I thank God for the privilege of suffering reproach for my Lord's sake. After a few months, my mother became very ill. My brother sent for a doctor. The doctor came. He was a specialist. He said to my brother, 'She has got typhoid, you will have to be careful.' When the doctor went away, my mother said, 'My son, you pray for me, I don't want the doctor's medicine, you pray for me.' So I knelt down and prayed just a short prayer, 'Lord touch my mother and heal her.' That very evening her temperature became normal. She had no more fever. From that time onwards, whenever they are in difficulty and trouble, they write to me, 'Please pray for us.' I have a small nephew. He calls me, 'Praying uncle.' Whenever he sees me he says, 'Praying uncle is coming.' Whenever they are in trouble they write to me or call me. What a privilege! Whenever I go to my home-town or to my relations or my friends, many come to me saying, 'Please pray for

us.' Thus you see, if we bear our sorrow and mourning cheerfully, afterwards others will be comforted through us. Those very ones who were cursing and abusing me, afterwards came to me for comfort. During those days the Lord drew near to me and said, 'I am with you always.' He became very dear to me in my sorrows. He took me through many sorrows for several years. I say it only for His glory. I spent many hours in tears. I was not wanted by anybody in the family. But the time came when they would call on me in their every need.

Comforted to be of comfort

A few years ago my third brother lost his eldest son, a young man of twenty-one years. He was knocked down by a train. It was a great shock to my brother and his wife. He would not eat or shave or even talk to anybody. When he came home and saw his son's body lying in the compound he fell down on top of it. His clothes got all stained with blood. He would not change those clothes for eight days. Many people came to console him. In fact almost the whole city came. On receiving the news I went by air to see him. When I saw his condition I did not know what to say to comfort him. He said to me, 'Tell me, where is your God now? What has happened to Him?' I kept quiet. I could not answer him. I just knelt down and prayed, 'Lord, comfort him; his sorrow is so great. He has lost his eldest son, a very nice young man. If only Thou wilt comfort him, he will change.' That same day he got up, changed his clothes, shaved and went to work in his office. What a comfort that was! So we ourselves have to mourn, in order to be able to comfort others. In other words, 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted'. You will then be a source of comfort to other people. See 2 Corinthians 1:4-7. Paul was able to comfort many because he was a partaker of the sufferings of Christ.

Unless we learn how to mourn, how can others be comforted through us? It is a great privilege to be able to comfort others. Wherever we go, tears can be wiped away: tears of failure, disappointment, criticism and unhappiness. That is how we can become the salt of the earth. When we go to a sorrowing home, just a few words will make them feel comforted and strengthened. Prayer, love, or a few words of comfort bring joy to those that are mourning. But first, we ourselves have to learn how to mourn. So do not be surprised when your father or mother, brother or sister, wife or husband, children or friends or neighbours hate you, curse you and reproach you. The Lord may take you through many sufferings and afflictions. It may be physical trouble, or death in the family, or any failure or tragedy. The Lord allows that, so that we first of all may be comforted by Him. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted'.

Some years ago, while I was in Canada, the weather was very cold. I had no money. I bought a tin of cocoa, and that was my only food for many days. One day, feeling very sad, I was walking in the street. I was saying in my heart, 'When I lived in sin, I had plenty of money and plenty of friends. Now that I am saved, I have no money and no friends!' I was feeling very sad. As I walked I saw a big building and went inside. There was an empty armchair and I sat down. Feeling hungry and tired, I went to sleep. As I was asleep on the chair, somebody put a hand on my shoulder and I heard a small voice saying, 'Why did you say you are lonely? Did I not tell you I will never leave you nor forsake you? Why are you sad?' I said, 'Lord, please forgive me for doubting Thee'. As I came outside the building and turned the corner, I saw a tall man. He came to me and said, 'Oh, I see you are from India!'

I said, 'Yes'. 'My parents are eager to meet a man from India. Please come with me to my house. That is my car over there. I will take you home to meet my father and mother'. I did not know him. They say that in America people rob you in the day time. They point a gun at you and take away your money. So I thought that he might be a thief. But I said to myself, 'I have no money and I have no watch—so why should I worry?' I went with him. It was a nice home by a lake. He said to me, 'We are so happy to have you; please stay for lunch'. Twice I said, 'No, thank you,'; but the third time, I consented, and they gave me a very nice meal. They became friends throughout my stay there. That is how the Lord encouraged me. In every sorrow, in every trial, He became dearer to me. That is how we become God's salt. Do you want to become God's salt?

Receive Him and become His salt

He says, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' This is possible only when the Lord Jesus Christ comes into us. He must become your living Saviour. When He became my Saviour, I did not know anything about salvation, or new birth, or atonement. I did not know anything about the devil. But the Lord appeared to me and showed me the awfulness of all my sins. I saw my body covered with black spots and there was a filthy smell. He said to me, 'Bakht Singh, these spots which you are seeing, and the smell which you are getting, are because of your sins'. I replied, 'Yes, my Lord, it is true. I have covered my sins from everybody all these years, but to-day I confess them. I am a great sinner, totally defiled and very miserable.' Then a loving voice came, 'This is My body broken for you, and this is My blood shed for the remission of your sins'. I said, 'Lord, these words are beyond my understanding. I am so stupid. I don't know what these words mean, but I know they are Thy

words. Although I do not understand, I believe them. Yes Lord, I am a sinner, I have sinned against Thee. I have spoiled my body. I have deceived my parents. Now I believe your body was broken for me, and your blood was shed for my sins'. Then came a small voice saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'. From that time I was completely changed. My taste for sins was taken away. My loving Lord came into my heart. I thank God even now for that happy day. I was a blasphemer and yet He forgave me. I am not worthy that He should love me and make me His for eternity. I know He is a loving Saviour. He loves me. I beseech you, therefore, do not reject Him. Do not be afraid of suffering and sorrow. He will give you everlasting comfort. He will lead you day by day. In every suffering He will say, 'My son, my daughter, I am with thee, do not be afraid'. I have proved Him in every sorrow. I love Him. He is my God. He will become your living Saviour. He will become very precious to you. If He has not yet become precious to you, let Him become so now. Amen.

5 Seasoning of Salt—3: Meekness

'Ye are the salt of the earth'; 'Ye are the light of the world' (Matthew 5:13, 14). These two phrases are related to each other. Let me illustrate this by an example. When we feel very hungry, tired and worn-out, our faces look miserable. We have no desire to speak to anyone or to smile. Sometimes we feel like crying. But when we are given tasty food, the very same worn-out faces begin to shine, and the eyes gleam with new light. That is how we feel spiritually when both light and salt come into our lives.

Hunger for Heavenly Joy

We have seen how the Lord Jesus Christ has been seeking to save sinners with the object of making them as salt which will bring new joy, new peace and new light to mankind. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to give joy to man. In every era people have had a great desire for joy, but they do not know how to get it. They do not know who God is, where He is and how to find Him and talk to Him.

I remember the hunger and thirst I myself had in my unconverted days. According to the teaching of the Sikh religion, I thought God was very far away, and I used to wonder how human beings could ever get near Him. I thought that only a very few people would ever be able to see Him, and that too, only from a distance, and after many years of searching. Yet I used to pray in my childhood days, 'Oh God? who art Thou? Where art Thou? How can I find Thee?' Many times I repeated these words, but I only felt I was getting farther and

farther away from God. In the same way there have been many men like me throughout the ages searching for God, longing for peace and trying to know Him as He is. In the end they have given up in despair.

One man came to me after wandering and searching for God seven years. He was a professor somewhere in South India. He became so unhappy, that he left his job, wife and children and became a sadhu. His hair and nails began to grow very long. He visited about eighty-four holy places in search of God. His face was full of wrinkles. I asked him whether he had found God. He said with great sorrow, 'I have tried and failed'. Thus you will find all through the centuries there has been in many hearts a hunger to know God. During my stay in London, before my conversion, I asked many people, both rich and scholarly, whether they had found true happiness. None of them could truthfully say that they were happy.

Secret of that Heavenly Joy

Heavenly joy has to be shared with others once we get it. We can never keep it to ourselves. We will have a desire and longing to share it with our neighbours, strangers, relations and anybody whom we may meet, even your enemies. Have you found that joy? Please tell me, how many people have found through you the same joy which you have? Your joy will become more as you share it. That is why our Lord says, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. Wherever you may be, you will spread happiness. We have seen also how we can become pure salt, that is, by having a poor spirit and a broken heart. We will be comforted by our Lord when our relations and friends begin to hate us or despise us. We have to go through every kind of sorrow to know divine comfort. Thus we will be trained to give comfort to others. Now, let us go further.

(a) *Meekness*: In verse 5 we read, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'. Many people have no idea how much God has planned to give to them. He will give us much more than we can ever think or imagine. But we would have to enter into God's heart to understand the privilege that is offered to us. Many years ago, a beggar came to me and begged for some money. I asked him for what purpose he wanted the money. He said that he was hungry. I said to him, 'You come with me, I will get you a very good meal'. He walked along with me for a distance and then asked me to give him an anna. I told him that I was not making fun of him and that I meant what I said. After walking a little further, again he asked me to give him a very small coin saying that he would go away. I told him that we had almost reached the hotel. At last we came to the hotel. I told the manager to give the man whatever he wanted. Then I also asked the beggar to take whatever he liked. Afterwards I gave him tea also. I paid the bill. Further, I gave him eight annas. He questioned me whether it really was for him. I replied him in the positive. He was so used to receiving just the smallest coins that he could not see my heart nor understand the desire I had in my heart for him. In the same way, we also find it so hard to believe that God can offer us so much (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9 and 10; Matt. 13:17 and Rev. 21:7). Are they not wonderful verses? 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Again, God's Word says that there were many prophets and righteous men who desired to see these things, but could not. God not only wants to forgive us our sins but He wants to give us all that He has.

Please see Matthew 11:28, 'Come unto me.' These

are the wonderful words of the Lord Jesus Christ. No other person in the world's history ever spoke such words. Our Lord knows fully well what heavy burdens all of us have to carry as sinners. How would you feel when you have to carry a heavy burden? When I was working in the fields, I had to carry heavy loads. After going a few yards I would become very tired; my feet, legs and even bones would get tired and weary. That is how we will feel when we carry our load of sin. It is a heavy burden. So our Lord says to all of us, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' What a loving invitation. The Lord Jesus was willing to pay the price for our sins. He paid it fully, even for our sinful thoughts and imaginations.

In China, when they invite you to a dinner, they will prepare at least twenty to thirty dishes. They will also give you all kinds of sauces and drinks to increase your appetite. They will provide you a towel to wipe your face whenever necessary. As you eat dish after dish, your stomach will say after some time, 'No more, no more. I cannot take any more!' In other words the stomach says, 'My dear master, now I am fully satisfied. I don't want another particle.' This is symbolic of full satisfaction and rest. God's Word says that the whole world was created by God, and then, on the seventh day, God rested. God saw that everything which He had made was very good. Imagine that day when God looked at His own creation. It was a wonderful creation free from the curse of sin. There was no mourning, no thistle, no poison. All things were so wonderful. Every part of the world was so beautiful. When He looked at the creation He had made, He said, 'It is very good.' It was beautiful and glorious. His heart was full of joy that day, and that is called rest.

Because of disappointment, God lost that rest. It was

indeed a terrible loss! It is now being recovered by the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes ships carrying valuable material sink in the sea due to storms. At such times many men are employed to pull them up from the sea. Our Lord came into the world to recover every loss. He will not be satisfied till we receive everything from God; everything in full, as purposed in the heart of God. This we can do by learning meekness. Only thus can we inherit all the wealth in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why He says, 'Come unto me ... and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' This is a life-long lesson to learn. Thus we must get rid of the pride we had before our conversion — pride of family, country, friends, relations or qualifications.

(b) *Humility*: I shall give you an example as to how we take pride in ourselves. I had a relation in Lahore occupying a good job. I would say to my friends who came to see me, 'Do you know that man Shanker?' They would reply, 'Yes'. Then I would say, 'He is my uncle', even though that uncle had never spoken to me! I would never call a poor man my uncle. The devil uses many devices to deceive us. Have you ever seen yourself in a mirror? It appears to say, 'My dear man, what good teeth you have! So beautiful!' Then you look into it again. Now it says, 'Have you seen your eyes? They are just like almonds! Look again. 'That is our nature'. We take pride in ourselves. Yet all these things will soon pass away. Talents and gifts will soon pass away. We are nothing before God. In the Bible we read that the holy God calls our righteousness 'filthy rags.' Just imagine filthy rags which even lepers would not take to tie their wounds, because they are so filthy. Such is our condition before God! After our conversion we are made into a peculiar treasure. But it requires meekness in us to under-

stand our heavenly calling. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 : 10, 'the grace of God which was with me.' He was a man of God whom the Lord used so mightily. Judging by his family, knowledge and education, he was a highly qualified man of the world. It was afterwards that he became an Apostle. Yet he says, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'

When we are born again, God gives each one of us some gift or other. But we should not feel proud of it. Let me give you an illustration. We do not thank the postman for bringing us money orders. If we did, he would say to us, 'Please do not thank me, thank the sender.' We also are only God's postmen. Whatever we receive from God we transmit to the people around us, and do so because of His grace. There is no reason why we should be proud of the talents given to us by God to be spent for others.

When I began to do God's work in India, I prayed to the Lord to give me a co-worker so that I might cover large and needy areas in open-air and personal work. I wished that this co-worker would be a university graduate. With such a friend, I thought I could pray freely and work effectively. One day a bearded man came to me and said, 'Brother, God is calling me to be your co-worker.' This man was a sweeper in the locality where I lived. He was an extremely foolish man. I wondered how God could call such a man for His service. One day he came to me and said, 'Brother, please give me your electric bulb. I have some guests in my house, so kindly lend it to me.' I did so. He returned in a little while and said it was not burning. I replied that it was a good bulb I had given him. He asked me to go to his house and see for myself. So I went. There I saw the bulb hanging on a rope. There was no electric wiring or anything. Yet he kept saying to me, 'It is not burning. It is not

burning.' He was so ignorant! Another day he came to me, saying, 'Please give me some work to do.' I said, 'You take these Gospels and sell them in the bazaar.' I told him fifteen times: the blue coloured one is Luke, the dark-green is Matthew, the red one is Mark, and the yellow is John. By the time he went outside the house he had entirely forgotten what I said. One day, in the bazaar, a certain man noticed his beard, and thought he must be a Mohammedan convert. To make sure he came to him, and asked, 'What were you before you became a Christian?' He replied, 'I was a donkey.' 'What do you mean?' 'Those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are donkeys.' The man said, 'I am not a donkey.' 'No, not you Sir, only those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are donkeys!' This man became my best co-worker. He would walk right into a Hindu temple and if anybody asked him, 'Don't you know it is our temple?' he would say, 'Sir, I did not know.' Thus he was very bold in selling Gospels to anybody, Mohammedans or Hindus or Christian pastors. My point is, even university graduates these days cannot open their mouths and speak boldly about the Lord Jesus Christ, they are so afraid; but God can use even fools to spread His Gospel. There is no need to be proud of anything, whether family status or education. God will use us only when we are humble and meek, thankful to God everyday for His grace. By humility alone can one be qualified for God's Kingdom and not by Bible knowledge or educational qualifications. Please see Matthew 5 : 5, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.' Any believer can obtain this inheritance. Thank God, our inheritance does not depend upon our health, our family, our education or any such thing.

My grace is sufficient

After my conversion I went on praying for two years

asking God to show me the secret of His power, so that my life could become triumphant and fruitful. After two years of prayer, one night the Lord met me and talked to me. 'Tell me, Bakht Singh, how were your sins forgiven?' I replied, 'Lord, I believed that I was the greatest sinner living. I believed that you shed your blood for my sins and you forgave my sins.' The Lord said to me, 'Tell me now, do you believe that you are the weakest person living and that you have no power?' At once all my doubts disappeared and I learned my weakness and helplessness without my Lord. I could not speak one word. I had to pray hard every day and say, 'Lord I am a stutterer and a stammerer. I cannot speak clearly. How can I speak to so many people? Please touch my lips and my throat.' He is so faithful and He knows my weakness and He said, 'My grace is sufficient.' It is abundant grace, sufficient grace, for any person. It does not matter who we are, illiterate, very poor, with many handicaps, ordinary people with ugly faces, in His hands we can become wonderful instruments, if we remain humble and meek. I can say that I am weak and helpless at every step, but I believe in His grace. Such faith alone will qualify us for His Kingdom.

First — ask Him to come in

But first of all, your sins must be forgiven. That is the beginning of the Christian life. All these truths cannot be understood by us without the experience of new-birth. I question you, Are you born again? you might get angry with me. When somebody questions you, How are you? What would you say? Would you get angry? You would smile and say, 'I am well. Thank you.' Now when we say, 'Are you born again?', it means, 'Are you well?' That is all! Why should you get angry? Has He given you peace? Are you well spiritually? Has He become your loving friend? Does He speak to you? Do

you speak to Him? Are you conscious of His presence? If you cannot say, Yes, to all these questions then come to His feet right now, this very moment while you are reading this, He will forgive your sins, wash you, pour His love into you and make you a member of His kingdom. But you must first ask Him to come into your heart.

6 Refining of Salt—1: Righteousness

Be Ye Perfect

The Bible proves three things about God. Firstly, it shows that *God is.* In their folly, men of all races have ever been trying to prove that there is no God. But the Bible declares that He is, and that He is a living and personal God; we can hear and feel and speak to Him. Secondly, the Bible shows us that *God is love.* You will find this truth in the whole of the last chapter of Revelation. Thirdly, it shows us that *God loves you,* no matter who you might be. Even though you are hated and despised by your fellow-men, yet I can definitely say to you, God loves you. When once we have tasted Him. then wherever we go and wherever we live, others will be able to taste that divine love through us. The Divine Love can flow out from us all the time not only by our preaching, but by our lives also.

For this reason God wants us to become good, pure salt. Good salt is very tasty. In Pakistan rock-salt is found. Once when I was leaving for Pakistan, I asked my mother, 'Do you want me to bring anything for you from Pakistan?' She replied, 'Bring me some Pakistani salt.' That is all she wanted. The salt here is not good, it is full of dirt and mud; but rock-salt is very pure salt. If you could use some of that salt here the food would be much tastier. We require good salt to get tasty food. Our Lord wants us to be good, pure salt. Even though he spoke these words to a very big crowd on the mount at that time, they were really meant for a few disciples; not because He did not want the multitude

also to be such pure, good salt but because the majority of them were only after loaves and fishes. These people were not seeking God. They were labouring for the meat that perisheth. But our Lord was offering them something far better. He summed up the whole sermon in one verse, Matthew 5 : 48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.' Consider what a high standard that is! That is why He came—to make us perfect. Even though we have been completelv ruined and defiled by sin, by coming into our Lord's hands we will become perfect and complete, without spot or blemish.

Many years ago, I saw a juggler doing some tricks. He took a good watch, and put it under an earthen vessel. Then he took a big hammer and smashed the whole thing to pieces. Then he put a cloth over it and said, 'Shoo!' and brought out a whole new watch instead. We wondered how it happened. We saw the watch broken into pieces and yet in a moment it had become a new watch. That is a trick of the juggler, but God does something real. We have been completely ruined and spoiled by sin. In the Bible we are called filthy rags. Yet when we are transformed. we become glorious immortal beings. It is a work of God and does not happen by our activity. It does not matter how badly we are damaged by sin. in the hand of God we are made perfect. That was the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ for the whole crowd. although many of them were onlv after loaves and fishes. The Lord desired to show them His love, and how thev could become real salt. the salt which brings true love and joy to the whole of mankind.

Hunger and thirst for God

We have seen from the earlier verses of Matthew chapter 5. that there are different refining processes to make us

pure salt. The third stage is given in verse 2. The Lord says, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Now, there are many people who claim to be looking for God, but in reality they are not looking for God. They only want something for themselves. Some want name and fame, so that people may consider them great and holy. To get such a reputation they are prepared to go through very great suffering and sacrifice. Now I will tell you a story that I have used many times before as an example. A king who invaded India many years ago, went about looting all the Hindu temples. In this way he gathered much spoil. When he had crossed the Indus river, he called his soldiers and said to them, 'You are my brave companions; you have been with me in my privations all these months. Now I want to reward you for all your faithfulness and sufferings. Please come and open this treasure bag which is full of gold, silver, diamonds and pearls. Divide the treasure among yourselves.' So the soldiers divided the treasures into a number of portions according to the number of men. Then each man took his portion. But one soldier kept standing by the king. The king said to him, 'You also go and take your share before you leave my service.' But the soldier replied, 'Sir, I choose you! I don't want gold, silver or diamonds. I want to remain with you forever.' Now, please tell me, who do you think got the greatest reward? When the king died, that same soldier became the heir to the throne.

We find many people seeking after God merely from earthly motives. For instance, some want children. Some years ago a Mohammedan man said to me, 'Brother, please pray for me. If I get a son, I will become a Christian.' I said to him, 'I know that you will not become a Christian. One who comes with worldly motives can never become a true Christian.' But he said to me,

'No, you please pray for me; I assure you I will become a Christian straightaway.' So I prayed for him. After one year I happened to visit that same village and he came to me with a shining face saying, 'God heard your prayer, and I have got a son. Now just give me six months only, then I will become a Christian.' After another year, I went there again, and he came to me and said, 'Please give me another six months.' He kept on coming to me for five years, saying, 'Six months more! Six months more!' Finally the child died, and today that man is still in darkness. Remember, if you have worldly motives you will never have any true experience of God. That is why our Lord says, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

Some years ago I was visiting a young couple. They were newly married and their first baby was only about two months old. While I was sitting and talking to the husband, the wife of course was busy in the kitchen cooking, and the child started to cry. The father did his best to pacify the cild. He brought toys and rattles to stop the child from crying. Then he took the baby in his arms and walked about the room. Then he gave it the feeding bottle, but still the child kept crying. Finally the mother had to leave her work and come to attend to it. She took the child and put it to the breast, and it stopped crying immediately. The child did not want any rattle or toy or feeding bottle. He only wanted his mother. For us also, it is only such a hunger and thirst for righteousness that will really satisfy us.

We see in Hebrews 5 : 12, 13, 14, how many believers remain spiritual babes for years together. You will find many people like that; it is only when they are in trouble, distress, affliction or sorrow, that they start praying. Many school children and college boys and girls are like that too. Just for their exams they will start praying,

'O Lord, help me to pass. If I pass, I will give you five rupees, but if I fail, I will not go to any meetings for two months.' That is how they pray, only when they want something. Others pray for deliverance, health, or healing, or for some other thing. Very few have that longing for righteousness of which God speaks here.

In the beginning of our Christian life, we long for many different things. Some of us long for signs and miracles. I used to think that if I could see some divine light shining in the room, I would be very much blessed. So I prayed, 'Lord, send some divine light into my room. I was praying very sincerely, and I used to pray like that for many hours every night. I thought that by seeing some kind of divine light, I would have more power. Then one night as I was praying, I saw some dim light shining in my room. I prayed again, 'Lord, make it brighter!' When I opened my eyes after some time, it was brighter. Again I prayed, 'Lord, make it brighter still, that the whole room might shine.' But again after some time, when I opened the window, I discovered that the light coming into my room was only moonlight! I had thought I was at last seeing some divine light!

I also used to have a great longing for a gift of some kind from God. Because I am not able to sing, I prayed for nine years that the Lord should give me the ability to sing songs or play some instrument. I thought that if I could play the violin, I would be able to do great work for God. But God gave me nothing. He left me without any such talents at all. I was just a fool. Then a new desire came to me,' 'Oh Lord, I only want Thee. I have no other desire now. I don't want any gifts of any kind. I only want to know Thee more and more, that You may become more precious and real to me.' From that day on, everything changed in my life, and I found a

great sense of satisfaction. The Scripture says, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' They are the ones who shall be satisfied. When we begin to pray that way, we will say, 'Lord, I have no other desire. I have not come to Thee for any favour. I am not asking you for anything but just to be with Thee forever and to enjoy Thy presence and to feel Thine arms around me.'

Now some people find it very hard to pray. I also found it very hard in the beginning. I used to read the Bible many hours a day. God took away the desire for the cinema and other worldly things. So I gave up all other books and used to read the Bible the whole day. I never got tired of reading the Bible, even though I would read for twelve hours or more. I never got tired of attending meetings every day. But I could not pray for more than five minutes. I tried very hard, but always, after a few minutes, my thoughts would go wandering, or I would go to sleep. This went on for more than two years. Then I thank God He taught me how to speak with Him. That became my most precious experience and the Lord took away from my heart all other desires. I used to say whenever I went to Him, 'Lord, I have not come to Thee for money, or for knowledge, or for other favours. You can keep me anywhere, send me anywhere, I only want to be with Thee. Give me the privilege and the honour of being with Thee and Thee alone.' Whenever you thus enter His divine presence, straightaway all tiredness, fear, or anxiety will disappear. Whatever may be your fear or trouble, no matter how painful may be your wounds, when you go to the Lord Jesus Christ, do not tell Him your worries, troubles or sorrows; He knows them before you tell Him; you kneel down and say to Him, 'Lord I want to come and spend this time with Thee. Let me enjoy Thy presence.' Then all your troubles

will vanish and when you get up from your knees, you will feel blessed and refreshed.

Satisfied with the fatness of Thy House

Let us see one more very important principle. The question is, with what can such hunger and thirst be satisfied? The answer is gfiiven in Psalm 36:8, 'They shall be abundantly satisfy with the fatness of Thy House.' Only by coming into God's House can God's people be fully satisfied. As we saw before, God's House is not just a stone or brick building. No building can be the spiritual House of God. We ourselves are the living stones which have to be put together to become God's House, according to 1 Peter 2:2.

By being born again, we become living stones. When I visited Palestine, I saw there some very big stones in an old Jewish building called the Synagogue. It is very beautifully made. If you take a small stone and strike one of these huge stones in the wall, it will produce a very sweet musical note, like the note of an organ. Every stone has a different note. Till today they do not know how these stones were cut. People come from great distances to see these stones, to knock them and listen to the sweet note. In the same way, when you are born again, you become a living stone of the Lord Jesus Christ, with heavenly music in you. Let people curse us, strike us, and speak ill of us, we can still say to them, 'The Lord bless you and make you more happy and forgive you.' Even though he was being stoned Stephen said, 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' That is, he was saying, 'Lord, fogive them'. The Lord gave him heavenly music. All such living stones put together make God's House. When we come among such true believers we will be abundantly satisfied.

After my conversion I used to wander to different

places, to different church buildings, with hunger in my heart. When I saw some huge building I would say in my heart, perhaps, if I go there I will be satisfied. But in spite of such big buildings, highly qualified preachers and grand organs, I would come out of the building with my hunger unsatisfied. This went on for two years. One morning I went for a walk in the streets of Vancouver. There I saw a small hut. Generally, they have very big stone buildings for Christian worship, but this was only a small hut. I thought, 'Let me go there for Sunday worship.' When I went in, somebody with a bright shining face came to greet me. He said, 'I am happy to see you.' Without even asking my name he asked me to come in and told me that there were only a few believers, but they loved the Lord. Everyone of them had Bibles. I was very happy there in the little hut. It is only among true believers we can enjoy God's presence. But the pity is, that in many towns there is not to be found any place of true fellowship of believers. That is why people are not satisfied. It is only by assembling together with God's children and worshipping God in spirit and in truth, with understanding of the heavenly mystery of God's house, will our hunger be abundantly satisfied. But sad to say, many believers do not know the meaning of the true Church. They call a building the Church; for instance, St. John's Church, St. Luke's Church and so on. The building cannot be the Church. We believers, put together, make the true Church. Only when we take our full share of the fatness to be found in the House of God can we find our hunger and thirst fully satisfied. As we worship the Lord, and as we see Him and feed upon Him, He will become more and more real to us. We will then be able to give the taste of good salt to the earth.

7 Refining of Salt—2: Mercy, Purity, Peace

Charm of Salt — Divine Love

Even though you may forget other messages, pray that you may remember this, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. Keep on praying with faith everyday, 'Lord make me good salt. Wherever I stay and labour, please give me the taste of Thy love and grace that others may taste Thy love, grace and mercy through me. By my words and deeds may others be strengthened, blessed, comforted and cheered. Through me may even my enemies get joy and comfort; those who are in darkness come into the light; those who are fallen be lifted up; and those who are in sorrow have their tears wiped away'. It is a great privilege to act as salt. By one act of kindness or by just a few words spoken in season, others will be comforted.

A story is told of the late king George V. When his mother died, his ministers came to condole with him. One by one they came to the king. They used many nice words. They said, 'Your Majesty, we are very sorry to hear the sad news'. They used many fine words and sentences in their condolences. Lastly the young minister Lloyd George came. When he went near, the king burst into tears. Afterwards the ministers said to Lloyd George, 'What did you say to the king? You said something to him that made him feel better. By your going to the king he was much comforted. We said many nice words but when you went, he was in tears holding your hand. He replied, 'I only looked into his face and held his hand, and he began to weep. He could feel from my

hand, I was really sorry for him.' The others had said many nice words from their head but not from their heart. Sometimes you can be true salt even though you might not speak. By just one touch from you others can be comforted. Many aches and pains can be removed from a grieving heart by one loving touch. The whole world is full of broken hearts. If we could see into one another's hearts we would be surprised how many wounds we all carry. People may not discover it, because we look happy and smile, I believe that in every heart there is some painful wound which no ointment or doctor can take away. Only divine love and sympathy can do it. To fulfil this purpose we are being prepared by our living Saviour to become the salt of the earth, so that wherever we be, others may be benefited by our contact with them.

Divine Love makes us merciful and forgiving

I have mentioned how in verses 3 to 10, the Lord reveals the ten processes of refining to make us the salt of the earth.

Now let us turn to verse7, 'Blessed are the merciful'. I believe that these words are primarily meant for believers, because only a true believer can show real mercy and kindness. They will be able to show mercy to anybody, anywhere and at any time. The most unlovely can be shown mercy, but it will be possible to us only if we have divine love. Without divine love even though we try we would not succeed. That is why it is necessary that the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. This love cannot be produced in us by any human activity or effort. It must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then spontaneously we would feel like helping others, and receive much joy in doing so. Only by such divine love will it be easy for us to forgive others. As men, our hearts often become hard.

There are many hard-hearted Christians. Whatever love they do show is only in words and not from the heart.

Some years ago a man came to me and said, 'Will you kindly pray for my wife and daughter?' He narrated how while he was away on duty in the railway, his wife and daughter ran away from home. He pleaded with tears, 'Please brother, pray for me'. I prayed for him, and he went away. After a while I was convicted in my heart. I thought to myself, 'That man came to me in great sorrow and tears, I cannot say truthfully that I prayed for him with a real burden. Supposing my own mother went away like that, how would I feel- I would feel like weeping'. I said, 'O God, forgive me. Give me a soft and tender heart. Give me a new burden for prayer'. I went on praying for more than two hours till I began to feel the same pain that he had. I prayed, 'Show Thy mercy to that man who is in need, and bring his wife and daughter back home'. Next morning I received a message that two women had come to see me. So I went to see them. They were the same man's wife and daughter. When they saw me they began to weep and say, 'Brother, pray for us, we were deceived by the devil and went away from home. We want to be forgiven.' They never knew that the man had also come to see me. How he was comforted when they returned! I also was happy. Only when we really feel for those who are in sorrow and affliction, can we show true mercy.

We get an opportunity to show mercy in Christ's name when others ask to forgive them (Matthew 18: 35). I have known in my experience that many people, when they were touched by God's Word, went and apologized to the persons concerned. But those persons would sometimes reply, 'Yes, I forgive you, but I won't talk to you. I will forgive you, but please don't come to my house any more'. That is not forgiveness. You must

forgive them from the heart, even though they might have sinned against you many times, (cf. Matthew 18:21 and 22). Please show mercy, and do not be a hard-hearted Christian. Be merciful and kind and forgive others as our Lord also has forgiven you. See again Colossians 3:13, 14. If you want to be merciful, then please be willing to forgive those who ask for forgiveness, even though they may come to you seventy times seven. By nature we are hard-hearted, so we have to pray again and again, 'Oh Lord, keep our hearts tender, kind and merciful'.

My father had a very bitter enemy because of whom he had to fight a case in the court for more than seven years and undergo heavy loss. One day I saw that man going to the bazaar in my home town. I followed him and put my hand on his shoulder. He turned around to me and asked, 'Do you recognise me?' I said, 'Yes, are you not Mr. So-and-So?' He looked very surprised and said, 'Nobody in your family ever looks at me. When they see me they curse me. But why are you talking to me?' I replied, 'My people wrote to me and I know all about it. I know the great harm that you have done to my father and my family. If I had come here without Christ, I might have thrown sticks and stones at you. But now I love you. When I heard about you, I began praying for you. I was a great sinner, but the Lord forgave me; So even though I know that you are a bitter enemy to my family, because the Lord has forgiven me of my sin, I also forgiven you. The Lord wants me to pray for you'. Then like a child he burst into tears saying, 'I never knew that there is such a love in the world.' It is only the Lord Jesus Christ that can put such love into our hearts. Oh, praise God, the 'salt' is a blessing, not only to our friends and relations but also to our enemies (cf. Romans 12:20, 21). 'Blessed are the

merciful: for they shall obtain mercy'. Remember we shall receive much more love from God than we can ever give.

Effect of Salt—purity and vision of God

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8). People often make fun of us when we preach in the open air, and say to us 'We want to see God. Show us your God, then we will believe Him'. They do not understand that before they can see God they must have a pure heart. That is an essential qualification. Many years ago, before my conversion, I thought that God was very, very far away, and that no man could possibly come near Him. But the Bible says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'. They shall see Him, not for one moment or one minute or one hour only, but for eternity. They will see Him in His full glory, and they shall be very near Him. According to God's Word we all have a wicked heart, a heart full of deceit and corruption. The Word of God says, 'The heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?' (Jeremiah 17:9). So how can we get a pure heart?

How to get a pure heart

Many people think that by self afflicted sufferings, by tears and by such other means, they can become pure. One man thought that if he could live alone and never look at any man or woman, eat only fruits and drink only water, then he would become pure. So he went into a dark mountain cave in Africa and lived there for seven years. When he came out, his friends asked him, 'How much purity have you received?' He replied, 'I have become more filthy than I ever was before'. His mind had become more corrupt and more defiled. Thus you see that you cannot become pure by human effort.

God's Word says in 1 John 1:7 that the blood of Jesus Christ goes on cleansing us continually. Let me explain this. The eye is so made that whenever any dust or foreign matter, however small, gets into it, the eye starts blinking and watering, until the dust is washed out. Thus the eye-ball is always kept clean. In the same way the blood goes on cleansing us. We always find some evil thought or other is trying to come into our hearts. They will not go away except by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we say by faith, 'Oh Lord, cleanse me', straightaway we are cleansed. The Lord will not say,'I have no time now. I will come and do it tomorrow.' On the other hand He says, 'Cry unto Me and I will answer'. How can we know that we are cleansed? Because then we will be able to see God. According to John 4:24, 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'. When we have been cleansed in our spirit we will know God, see Him and be with Him.

Every man is made of three parts: body, soul and spirit. Now what is the body? It is made up of muscles, bones and blood. What is the soul? It is constituted of instinct for thinking, emotion for loving, and will-power for making decisions. Then the spirit is that by which we are able to know God, worship Him and do His will. Now a sinner has a dead spirit, darkened soul, and a defiled body. Of these three, spirit, soul and body, God who is Spirit, cannot come into my body or mind (that is soul); He can only come into my spirit. When He comes in our dead spirit it will be quickened. But God is holy, and before He can come in, He has to make us holy. He does it by His blood. By His blood He cleanses my conscience and then comes into my spirit. That is called *New Birth.* Then He goes on cleansing me constantly. When we are born again, our spirit is quickened,

and the soul and the body also are made pure. God lives in us in Spirit and then by our spirit we can know Him and feel Him. If we come to Him in prayer and tell Him, 'My Lord, I have come to see Thee, and to speak to Thee, and to spend some time with Thee,' He replies, 'Yes, my child, I am happy to see you. Tell me your burdens. What is your question? What is your difficulty? Tell me freely.' Then God says, 'My child, let me speak to you, and give you something, and show you something.' Thus we can see Him all the time in the spirit, provided we remain pure and holy. To enjoy this privilege always, we must be cleansed constantly by faith through His precious blood. You can pray in this way, 'Lord Jesus, I am defiled by my angry words; I am defiled by my wicked thoughts. Will you wash my thoughts by Thy precious blood?' He then speaks to you, 'Yes my child. I, forgive you and wash you. Go and sin no more.' He gives you heavenly joy and you go on talking with Him continually. Then these words will be fulfilled. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' You will be able to enjoy unbroken fellowship with Him; and through your experience, many others will be inspired to come to God.

Work of Salt — Peace Making; Divine Sonship

In Matthew 5:9 we read, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God'. By nature all of us were God's enemies. When we were born again we became children of God. Now worldly people are God's enemies and also ours. They will hurt us, wound us and do us harm. By their words and thoughts, and deeds, they are constantly wounding God. That is why they are rightly called God's enemies. When you are born again you become a peacemaker. Then God's enemies will become God's friends through you, and this ministry is a privilege given to you as a child of God.

When God called me for His service, I began to offer one excuse after another. I told Him I could serve Him with my money and with my job. I went on struggling in this way for two years. One Sunday morning, in the month of January 1932, God spoke to me very clearly through a man called Flynn. He held my hand in his that morning and said, 'Why don't you go to India and preach the Gospel?' I replied, 'Mr. Flynn, I am an engineer. I have spent five years studying engineering and I have spent much money undergoing training. How can an engineer be a preacher? Besides, I stammer and stutter so badly no words will come out of my mouth. How can a stammerer and a stutterer preach? As for music I cannot sing one note.' However, his words were ringing in my ears, 'Why don't you go to India and preach the Gospel?' Then I said to God, 'I promise Thee I will give Thee all my money. I don't want my money for my own use or comfort. You take all my money. But I beg Thee not to make me a preacher. I cannot be a preacher.' Still God said, 'I don't want your money; I want *you*.' But even then I argued with the Lord, 'I will earn money and employ many preachers, men who can sing, witness and preach; and they will do the job better than I. As an engineer I can earn money and give it for Thy service.' Yet God insisted, 'I don't want your money, I want you. Why don't you go to India and preach the Gospel?' I thank God, at last I yielded in April 1932. I said to Him, 'Today I yield my life to Thee. I give you everything and I make no reservation, You can send me anywhere, and keep me anywhere, for any length of time. Lord, I give myself to Thee.' The Lord replied, 'I accept you for my service on three conditions: first of all, withdraw all claims from your property and don't tell any human being by letter or hint or suggestion about your material needs; you must tell it to Me alone. Secondly, don't join

any Society or Mission. Serve all equally. Thirdly, do not make your own plans; let me lead you day by day.' I replied, 'I agree.' It was settled on April 14, 1932, at half-past-two in the morning, in the city of Vancouver, Canada. The past thirty-two years have been to me years of great joy. In every part of India, Pakistan and Ceylon and other countries too, among rich and poor; high and low, I have seen God's enemies becoming His friends. It is the highest joy in the world to see others coming to the Lord's feet and finding heavenly joy through us. Thus we shall become peacemakers and we shall be called the children of God.

God's Calling—Yield to Him

Is God speaking to you 'Follow Me, follow Me?' Do not resist Him. Do not waste your time arguing with God saying, 'After some years I will surely do so. Only let me get my children married off, first of all.' How the devil tries to prevent us from obeying God! May God help you to obey Him even though He might send you to the uttermost parts of the world. You must be willing to undergo much discomfort in the preparation. Do not think much of human qualifications. God can use any one of us if we are willing to yield to Him. But He will not use force to compel you. Only when I said to God, 'I give Thee my life' did He take me and use me. Then in His own way He gave me training. He took me through many painful trials, and I thank God for them all. Now I would plead with you, please obey Him now. Say to Him, 'Take my life and use me as Thou wilt.'

There was a beggar who earned his living by playing violin. He would get hardly two rupees a day. One day a man passing-by saw him playing. This man was a master violinist. He came near and said to the beggar, 'Please lend me your violin.' The beggar gave it to him and the man began to play. Very soon a big crowd

gathered. What wonderful music it was! The great violinist said, 'If you feel like it, you may give this beggar over here whatever you like.' That day the beggar became a rich man. It was just the same violin which the beggar had always played, but then the music had not been beautiful. But now that it had come into the hands of the master musician, it was wonderful. In the same way when we give ourselves to Lord Jesus Christ, He can bring out through us wonderful, heavenly music. So yield to Him, respond to Him and say, 'My Lord I will follow Thee; take my life; make me Thy witness; use me for Thy glory. I am willing to spend and be spent for Thee.' While you are yet young give your life to Him. Do not wait until old age. 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.' They shall give God full pleasure.

8 Refining of Salt—3: Persecution

Salt — the Secret of Divine Life

It is my fervent prayer, that wherever you go, whether you may be travelling or labouring for the Lord, or perhaps only sitting quietly, the Lord should use you as the salt of the earth. Perhaps only a few kind words that you speak, may be the simple means by which the Lord will help you to fulfil this precious ministry. May the Lord so possess and change you, that many who are passing through sorrow, sickness, trouble and affliction will be able to taste through you the joy of possessing divine life.

Needless to say, God can never use you in this way unless first of all that divine life comes into you. Once we were conducting a campaign in a city in North India for about seven weeks. We announced that at the conclusion of this campaign we would have a love-feast. Every family should bring some food and then all the food would be mixed and shared by all. Accordingly, they all brought food with great love, and the love-feast was a very happy occasion. Soon after, we left that city. A few months later, the missionary of that city also announced a love-feast on Christmas day. He asked all the people to bring their own food so that they could all share it together. However, when the day arrived, none brought any food. The missionary was very angry. He said to them, 'Only a few weeks ago you all brought such nice food; why could you not do so today?' The people replied, 'On that previous occasion we tasted the fellowship of love and we were constrained to bring our food.

But now we can see no love, but only words.' It is only when you have the experience of love yourself that you will be able to lead others into it. First you must become salt. Then automatically, the divine love will come into you and will be poured through you into others.

We read in God's Word that He has chosen us. He wants to refine us and make us good salt. In Matthew chapter 5 we see the divine processes through which God wants to take us. No matter how handicapped we might be, yet by taking us through these divine processes God can make us acquire the divine virtues. Perhaps earthly prosperity might be possible for children who are clever and intelligent, but not for children who fail to get promotion year after year. But spiritual blessing is available to all. People might be dull and foolish, or they might come from poor families, or from some backward country, or from unfavourable circumstances; yet they also can be made into good salt and be endued with divine virtues. Day after day, often early in the morning, the Lord Jesus Christ went about seeking to save sinners. As a result, people who had become absolutely worthless because of their shameful lives, were transformed into mighty men and women of God. Since that time God has done great things through them. Now let us consider one more stage of refining salt.

Persecution — a blessing

In Matthew 5:10, we read these words: 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.' Many years ago, there was a lame man, a Punjabi. He was truly born again and was baptized. Any one could see from his shining face that God had wrought some wonderful work in his life. However, the people of his village persecuted him and tried to turn him back to his old religion. When

they found him firm and strong in his faith, they took his things and threw them out of his house. They treated him with contempt. They would not allow him to draw water from their well. They even threatened to injure him. Undaunted by all these things, the lame man went and lived under a tree, and took water from a distant place. A missionary heard of his faith and came to see him. He told him that he had heard of his danger and wished to help him and save him. But the man refused to leave the village. He replied, 'God has saved me and changed my life to use me as His witness in this village. Even though I might have to die for the Lord's sake, I am prepared for it, and I will not leave this place.' Every morning he would begin his work with a shining face. He prayed for those who were persecuting him. After sometime, the people in the village were convinced that he was a man of God. They came to him and asked forgiveness, and confessed that they had never realised that he had found God in such a wonderful way. Thus through one lame man many received the experience of salvation. By learning to bear persecution we receive strong faith and we learn to cling to our Lord. God's Word says, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5 : 10).

Some years ago a Muslim man came to me and said he wanted to become a Christian. He was a university graduate. 'Have you been to meetings anywhere?' I asked him. 'No,' he replied. I asked him how he had become interested in the Gospel. He told me that one day he had gone to see a Hindu friend in his neighbourhood. There was a small verandah in front of his friend's house and while he stood there a sweeper came to sweep it, and put his basket in a corner. While this man was sweeping, a Hindu shopkeeper also came to the house

and entered the verandah. He was wearing a dhoti, and his dhoti happened to touch the basket. The man got very angry. He removed his shoe and started beating the sweeper with it, saying, 'Why did you put your basket here?' 'That is my duty; I have only come to sweep,' he replied. So saying, the sweeper turned his other cheek to him and continued 'God bless you.' When it was all over, the Muslim who had been watching said to the sweeper, 'Why did you allow him to beat you? It was not your fault; you were only doing your duty. It is entirely his fault; he should have lifted up his dhoti a little and walked carefully.' But the sweeper replied, 'If my Lord suffered so much for me, should I not suffer a little for His sake?' The Muslim continued his story and said to me, 'It was the sweeper's love that worked in me. That is the reason I now want to become a Christian.' He became a Christian, was baptized, and became a good witness for the Lord. 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' Thus we can see how love can be shed abroad in the hearts of others if we endure persecution patiently.

There is another example in Acts 7:54 to 60. Here we see a man of God called Stephen filled with the Holy Ghost. He was persecuted because of the testimony he bore for the Lord Jesus Christ. He had done many good works. The widows, the poor and the orphans had been blessed through him. Notwithstanding, the religious leaders were angry with him. They accused him falsely. Yet we see how he forgave them. Stephen was willing to be stoned. He faced death with a shining face. Instead of cursing the men who stoned him, he prayed, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Have mercy upon them and forgive them.'

A man called Saul was watching all this. The men who stoned Stephen had laid their clothes at his feet, and

we read in Acts 8:1, that Saul was consenting unto Stephen's death. He was a witness to his death. He saw his shining face. He heard him pray, 'Forgive my enemies.' And he would have wondered how any man could suffer so joyfully. Later, that very same man Saul became the great apostle Paul. What a great change it was! That work began in him on the day of Stephen's death. He had been one of the bitterest enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had dragged believers into jail and killed many of them. Now he became a servant of Christ. We read in Acts 16:24, 25 how the bare bodies of Paul and another disciple were beaten and their feet put in the stocks. In spite of all this, at midnight, they prayed and sang joyfully. They did not murmur or complain or curse their enemies. They sang praises unto God. The example of Stephen so changed Saul that he was able to bring new life and blessing to all in the jail. Soon after, all these prisoners were also singing songs of praise to God. Generally, when men go to jail, the first night they will be cursing everyone. These prisoners were quite different. Instead of cursing, fighting and quarrelling, as prisoners usually do, they sang praises to God. Then God sent an earthquake which shook the whole place and their chains fell off. Every one's bands were loosed. The jailor, thinking that all the prisoners had escaped, was about to kill himself. Then Paul said to him, 'We are all here, don't kill yourself' (verses 26, 27). 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.' It is a great honour, privilege and joy to be persecuted for God's sake. Thus a small quantity of salt had changed the whole jail. The inmates of the jail were murderers, thieves and rogues. Now they all became lambs. These converted prisoners became witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way the Gospel was preached in Europe. Thus, because Stephen

bore persecution joyfully, although he himself died, new life, new joy and new blessing came to the Church throughout the whole world. These blessings have kept on spreading and are continuing to do so even until now. God's Word says in 2 Tim. 3 : 12, that whosoever you might be, whatever your country, or condition or qualification, if you want to live a godly and pure life, and if you want to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have to endure persecution.

There are many people these days working in the railway, police and other Government Departments, who are in the habit of receiving bribes. They share what they get with many people, even with their Inspectors and Officers. But if you want to be faithful, you must be prepared to be persecuted by ungodly people. How many suffer because they refuse to take a bribe or give a bribe! Many lose their promotions for many years. So be patient, even though you have to suffer. God's Word says that you are going to be abundantly rewarded in heaven.

Rejoice in persecution

In Matthew 5 : 12 we read, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.' When you are persecuted and falsely accused by men, perhaps the authorities in your schools and colleges, be patient. Do not worry about your promotion which has been withheld. God will give you more than you have lost. Some school teachers have to record false attendance. If they refuse to do so, they will be persecuted, and their colleagues will scheme against them. If you are wrongfully suffering in that way, thank and praise God, for He will surely reward those who suffer joyfully. Even though you may lose your job or promotion and go through extreme suffering, rejoice in it, and think of the blessing that others are going to receive through you. We must be willing and ready and prepared for perse-

cution of every kind, through neighbours, friends or relatives. It is a strange thing, when we lived a worldly life, full of sin and shame, our worldly friends loved us; now that we want to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and lead a holy life, they persecute us. Nevertheless, give thanks to God who will reward you for bearing persecution. See Acts 1 : 50-52. Through some faithful men, God's Word came to Antioch in Pisidia, and many lives were changed. Instead of being thankful to these men for this wonderful ministry, the people of that region began to hate them and persecute them. They said, 'We don't want you, go away from here. We don't want you.' The disciples left Antioch and went to their friends in Iconium, and told them their experiences. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and with joy. They did not murmur or complain. They thanked God for the privilege of suffering persecution, because they knew that through the same persecution salt was going out through them. It is because of that salt, that you now see the true Life in many parts of the world.

We know from secular history that many believers had to bear extreme persecution. Many were killed for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as we love to watch a football match in a big stadium today, in the same way the Romans loved to observe hungry lions devouring Christian believers. They would bring them from all parts of the country, men, women and children, and they would threaten them saying, 'Unless you deny the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be thrown into the ring.' First they would throw the children before the eyes of their mothers, so that they would see their own children devoured by the lions. Those men were so hard-hearted! They would threaten the Christians again and again, 'Now we give you time to deny the Lord Jesus Christ. If you refuse you will be eaten by the lions.' But those

brave men and women never yielded to their threatenings. Singing songs of praise they would go into the theatres to be devoured by the lions. Many Romans, who saw the shining faces of the believers marching to be torn by the lions, were converted at that time. Some faithful Christians were dragged by the hair through the streets. Some had chilli powder poured into their eyes. Even then they did not deny their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This went on for three centuries. That is how, by their joyful suffering, they laid the foundation of the true Church.

There are some Christians who put a *thilakam* (a religious mark of the Hindus) on their foreheads. They are ashamed to be called Christians. They wish to be identified with Hindus. During the communal riots in Karachi (Pakistan), a Christian woman with this mark on her forehead was seen by a Mohammedan. He thought that she was a Hindu, so he approached her with a dagger to kill her. The woman began to shout, 'I am a Christian.' He asked her, 'Are you a Christian? Then what about that mark on your forehead?' She immediately put her hand to her tongue and rubbed it off. Many Christians are ashamed of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are afraid to suffer persecution. As a result, their lives are barren, shameful and corrupt.

When we bear our persecutions joyfully, we are abundantly rewarded. Our great reward is that through us many more will taste divine love and see divine light. 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of God.' Never mind when people falsely accuse you. If you want to grow spiritually, do not take any notice of their false charges. The disciple is not above his Master. The more we obey the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we will be falsely

accused by ungodly people. But thank God for the privilege of being His. 'Ye are the salt of the earth.'

Is your life good salt?

May the Lord prepare us into good salt which not only gives taste, but shows abundant grace and compassion for all those around. As the salt of the earth we can wipe away many tears and bring joy to many homes, and thus make sorrow and misery to flee away from them. God is calling you for such a ministry. Please tell me faithfully, has your life become like good salt? Can you tell me of any person who has tasted divine life through you? Your father, mother, brother or sister? When I became a Christian my mother said, 'Why did you leave such a high religion like ours?' I replied, 'Please tell me one thing. Does anyone love me more than you do? Yet, answer me, what can you do for my soul's salvation?' She replied, 'How could I help you in such a matter?' Then I continued, 'That is the very reason why I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. He has saved my soul. I have begun to pray for your salvation too.' What a joy it was, one day, to hear my mother say, 'I am ready.'

If you humble yourself and confess your sins, the Lord Jesus will wash you in His blood and give you new life. With that life you can become like salt, always giving new taste, new life and new blessing wherever you go.